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MUTUAL
LOVE

Recommended upon

Christian Principles.

By JEREMIAH HUNT.



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LONDON:
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TO
Mr. Thomas Hollis, Sen^r.

AND THE
SOCIETY

Who meet at
PINNERS-HALL:

The Following
DISCOURSE

Preach'd, and Publish'd, at their REQUEST,

Is Inscribed:

By Their Affectionate

Humble Servant,

JEREMIAH HUNT.

Mr. Thomas Hollis, Senr.

AND THE

SOCIETY

Who meet at

PINNEVERSHALL

The Following

DISCOURSE



Preached at

Islington

By the Rev. Mr. Thomas

Hollis, Senr.

JOSEPH HUNT.

I JOHN iii. 2.

*For this is the message, that ye
heard from the beginning, that
we should love one another.*

SINCE there is no subject of greater importance to the christian life, and which deserves more to be treated with the utmost perspicuity, and compass, than the love that christians are obliged to practise ; I shall endeavour from these words to discourse upon it under the following heads.

I. I shall explain what is included in loving one another.

II. Set before you the characters, which should attend this love.

III. Re-

III. Represent the obligation we are under by the christian religion (for 'tis to that way of proof that I shall express my chief regard) to the practice of it. And,

IV. Recommend it.

I. I shall explain what is included in loving one another.

Love implies in it a settled and constant good will to others, and in this part of the idea of it, stands oppos'd to dislike, aversion, malice, and rancour, which, whenever they prevail, suppose the absence and want of love, and such a temper as is intirely inconsistent with the character of a christian, and the genius of christianity.

This steady and fixt benevolence, which love comprehends in it, is always attended with a careful shunning of every thing that is prejudicial, and injurious to another. We should not apprehend, that he who can designedly hurt us in any of the rights, to which we have a just claim, hath any real love for us, let his pretensions of affection run ever so high. This is fully represented by the apostle; *(a) for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: for this, thou*

(a) Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.

thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

And as love worketh no ill to his neighbour; so it steddily disposes to all offices of goodness. They, in whom this happy temper prevails, (b) put on (as the elect of God, holy, and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel (or matter of complaint) against any, even as Christ hath forgiven them. Such, with their utmost care, (c) put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice; and are kind one to another, * tenderhearted, even as God for † Christ's sake hath forgiven, forgiving one another. They, with great gentleness instruct the ignorant, and have compassion on such, as have wander'd from the path of virtue, attempting by the mildest, and yet the most faithful methods, to reclaim and recover them; and if they are

(b) Col. iii. 12, 13.

(c) Eph. iv. 31.

* ἑυπλάγχνοι.

† ἐν Χριστῷ.

so happy as to succeed, the joy they feel, arises from a sense of having done good, the genuine fruit of christian love, in one of the noblest and most considerable instances of it. If any man *(d)* be overtaken in a fault, they endeavour to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering themselves; lest they also be tempted. They are so far from looking on their own things only, that they rejoice with those who rejoice, and have a tender sympathy with those that mourn. The objects of distress which occur, raise in them the most sensible emotion of tenderness, and concern, which will not suffer them to say, *(e)* depart in peace, be you warm'd, and fill'd; notwithstanding they give them not those things which are needful to the body: but will strongly influence them to relieve their necessities, as far as their ability will allow; *(f)* for whose bath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? And since they find their power this way to be limited, they settle, by the best measures of prudence they can form, the degree of this sort of beneficence which is suited to their circumstance; and take the greater care, to fix on the most agreeable

(d) Gal. vi. 1.*(e)* James ii. 16.*(f)* 1 John iii. 17.

objects of expressing this mark of their christian love, which they always do without having the applause of men chiefly, much less only, in their view.

I shall conclude this description of the love that the christian religion recommends, with the most elegant and beautiful representation that the apostle *Paul* gives of it. (f)

Charity suffereth long, is slow to anger, and defers resentment; and *is kind*, expresses humanity, and is steddily good, and benign; *charity envieth not*, looketh not upon others with an evil eye, on the account of something which is possess'd by them that is excellling. This some in the church of *Corinth* were guilty of, in respect to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. *Charity vaunteth not itself*, does not act rashly, is not addicted to boasting, or ostentation, as many of the *Corinthians* were on account of their gifts: *is not puffed up*, but has attending it humbleness of mind: *doth not behave itself unseemly*, in acting any thing that is indecent and unbecoming the character: *seeketh not her own*, but expresses a regard to the good of others; does not so much respect the gifts he has, as possess'd by himself, as their subserviency to the advantage

(f) 1 Cor. xiii.

and benefit of the society. *Is not easily provoked*, suffers not resentment soon to kindle, and when it is on just occasion excited, lays restraint upon it, and keeps it within proper measures: *thinketh no evil*, doth not easily suspect evil of another; when the case is doubtful takes that side which is most candid; and is not inclin'd to impute evil to others beyond absolute necessity: *rejoiceth not in iniquity*, in falsehood, and the practice of what is evil; * *but rejoiceth in the truth*, in integrity and upright behaviour; — or (which I rather think) *rejoiceth not in iniquity*, will not permit us to rejoice, but rather cause in us resentment of grief, to find men still to continue in their false worship, as the gentiles; or in opposition to the doctrine of Christ deliver'd to them, as the Jews † did: *but rejoiceth in the truth*, in seeing men walking in the truth of the gospel. *Beareth all things*; or, as the word || properly denotes, *covereth all things*, is not desirous of bringing forward to view, and exposing the weaknesses of others; but is rather dispos'd kindly to conceal, and cover them; and this interpretation keeps this character of love perfectly distinct from that which follows, *endureth all things*, which can scarcely be done according to our tran-

* Grotius.

† Whitby.

|| *σέβει*.

flation. *Believeth all things*, had much rather believe the things, which, when believ'd, do no mischief, than rashly to condemn any of falsehood; or it makes us ready to believe all the good it hears, or can have any charitable ground to think of others: *it hopeth all things*, it disposes to hope the best of mens designs, and actions, when they are capable of different constructions; and if our brother be at present bad, it does not hastily despair of his amendment, and prevent attempts of reformation; but rather inclines to hope, and so to use all proper means to effect it: *endureth all things*, tho' grievous to be born, without returning evil for evil, inabling us to forbear one another in love. *Charity never faileth*, there is no time or circumstance, that can be imagin'd, that love, and the exercise of it, is not requisite and proper; tho' prophecy, and other extraordinary gifts, when they have answer'd their end of confirming the doctrine of Christ, shall cease, yet charity shall never cease. Having thus explain'd what is included in loving one another; I proceed

II. To set before you the characters that should attend this love.

The love that the doctrine of Christ recommends, is to be *extensive*. *As we have*
 B 2 *therefore*

therefore opportunity let us do good to all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith (g). See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men (h). And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another and towards all men, even as we do towards you (i). Hither may be referr'd the exhortation: To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men—(k). And comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient to all men (l). The extent of the love which we are to cultivate, is beautifully represented by our Saviour in the parable of the Samaritan. (m) But he [the lawyer] willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stript him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead, and by chance there came down that way a certain priest, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side, and likewise a levite, when he was at the place came, and looked on him, and passed by on the other side; but a certain

(g) Gal. vi. 10.
iii 12.

(h) 1 Thes. v. 15.
(k) Titus iii. 2.

(i) 1 Thes.
(l) 1 Thes. v. 14.

(m) Luke x. 29.

Samaritan (of a different nation, and religion, and with whom the Jews had no intercourse of favours) *as he journied came where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, &c. which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him, that fell among thieves? And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him go, and do thou likewise; and restrain not the sense of the term neighbour* (as many of your teachers do) to those, who are of your nation, and religion; but comprehend in it all such, as being objects of distress call for your compassionate regard. If there are any to be exempted from our love, one would imagine, it should be such as are our enemies, and who treat us in a cruel, and unkind manner; and yet our Saviour recommends to us in express words the loving them. (n) *But I say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you.* And supports it by the following argument. *For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the Publicans, who were of an infamous character, the same? and if you salute your brethren only,*

(n) Matth. v. 44,—46, 47.

what do you more than others? (when my design is to raise you, who are my disciples, to a distinguish'd and peculiar excellence) Do not even the Publicans so? (o) But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies — for if ye love them which love you, what thank have you? for sinners also love those that love them. And if you do good to them, which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them, of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again; but love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great.

The love which the christian is to express should be *sincere*. Let love be without dissimulation (p), not feign'd and put on; but real, and undisguis'd. When the apostle Paul gives an account of his behaviour, this makes up part of the character; *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blam'd, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience — by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, — by love unfeign'd (q).* The apostle Peter recommends this affection,

(o) Luke vi. 27, 32, 33.
 *†††, without hypocrisy.

(p) Rom. xii. 9. ἀνυπό-

(q) 2 Cor. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6.

when he exhorts us, *seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth unto unfeign'd love of your brethren* (r), *see that you love one another with a pure heart*; that is a heart which is sincere, and without disguise, and in which undissembled love prevails. There can be nothing more unbecoming the character of a christian, then the appearance of love in soft address, and softer expressions, when at the same time real affection is wanting.

The love which the christian religion recommends ought to be *intense*. Christians are to love one another, not at a common rate, and in an ordinary degree, and with such a love, as men of the lowest character express to those, who love them; but we are injoin'd to *love one another, as Christ hath loved us* (s). *And to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering, and sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour* (t). Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he [Christ] laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, (u) when the glory of God, and their good in having their faith in the truth of the gospel confirm'd by it, make it necessary. The apostle *Peter*

(r) 1 Pet. i. 22.
v. 2.

(s) John xiii. 34.
(u) 1 John iii. 16.

(t) Eph.

exhorts us ; (x) *above all things to have fervent charity among ourselves, and to see that we love one another with a pure heart fervently.* (y)

The love which christians are to practise should be *active*. We are to *love* one another *not in word, neither in tongue, only, but in deed and in truth*. The love which we are to express, is to be attended with all offices of goodness in the compass of our power, which are the proper fruits of it. (z) *Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also, namely, liberality to the poor Jews at Jerusalem. I speak not by commandment, as to the time or degree how much you should confer; but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity * of your love.* For this reason the apostle (a) makes mention of *labour of love*. *Remembring without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love.* And — *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shew'd toward his name in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

(x) 1 Pet. iv. 8.
viii. 7, 8.
vi. 10.

(y) 1 Pet. i. 22.
* τὸ γνήσιον [genuineness]

(z) 2 Cor.
(a) Heb.

Finally, we are to *love one another as Christ hath loved us, and given himself an offering and sacrifice for us.*

Christian love should be *constant* and *growing*. To love one another arises from our make, and while we continue what we are, and related to others of the same frame, the practice of it will be fit and reasonable; *Charity never faileth*. The word * which is us'd in the exhortation of *Peter*, *See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*; sometimes signifies *continually*, and the following verse seems to favour that sense, *being born again not of corruptible seed; but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth, and abideth for ever*, in the effects it produceth, and particularly in constant, and perpetual love. And as christian love should be *permanent*, so it should be *increasing*. (b) *And this I pray, that your love may abound, yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment. And the Lord make you to increase, and abound in love one to another, and towards all men* (c). The apostle *Peter*, when he had exhorted to love one another with a pure heart fervently, and in the following verses offer'd an argument to engage to the practice of it, recommends that laying aside all malice, &c.

* ἐκ τῆς φύσεως.

(b) Phil. i. 9.

(c) 1 Theff. iii. 12.

they might desire the sincere milk of the word, thereby to grow in love; and under another metaphor of building, which gradually rises, farther advises to it; *Be ye built*. And we may easily know, when it is improving in us, when the passions which are unfriendly to it, anger, envy, &c. do less frequently arise in us, and when they do, are with greater ease suppress'd, when the genuine fruits of love are more numerous, and equal, and the ease and delight which attend them are greater. I come now to the third general head.

III. To represent the obligation we are under by the christian religion (for 'tis to that way of proof that I shall express my chief regard) to the practice of it.

I might reason this point from the principles of benevolence and compassion, which are in our make; the fitness of its practice to our frame and state; and the equity of performing it, when we form the expectation of it from others: but I chuse rather to lay before you the many plain and express passages of the New Testament, which recommend it to us. (d) *A new commandment* (call'd so, because enacted anew with the greatest clearness and extent, and inforc'd by new motives) *I give unto you*

(d) John xiii. 34.

*that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (e) This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you—These things I command you, that ye love one another (f). And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us. (g) This is the message, that ye heard from the beginning (of the gospel) which was deliver'd by the greatest * legate, that God ever sent to men, that we should love one another.*

The expressions, which are made use of to recommend mutual love, carry in them a remarkable emphasis, and peculiar force. *(h) Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; or in the love of the brethren, let your affection be strong and intense, like to that which parents have to their children. (i) For, brethren, ye have been call'd unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but by love serve one another. Be as servants one to another in affection. (k) Finally, brethren, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, sympathizing with each other, love as brethren, be pitiful, of tender bowels one to another, be courteous.*

(e) John xv. 17.
(g) 1 John iii. 11. * ἀγγελία.
τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ—φιλόσοφοι.
ἀλλήλοις.

(f) Eph. v. 2.
(h) Rom. xii. 10.
(i) Gal. v. 13.

(k) 1 Pet. iii. 8.

When a lawyer ask'd Christ, tempting him, which is the great commandment in the law? which was a question debated among the Jewish doctors, and about which different sentiments were entertain'd; some making it to be circumcision, and others sacrifice; our Lord reply'd: (l) *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, this is the first, and great commandment; and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self, on these two commandments hang all the law, and the prophets.* (m) *And to love him with all thy heart — and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings, and sacrifices.* The apostle assures us, that in *Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.* Love is represented as *fulfilling the law*: (n) *Owe no man any thing, but love one another, for he that loveth another, hath fulfill'd the law.* It is stiled the bond of perfectness. *And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness* (o); that is, the most perfect cement of union. It is called, on the account of its excellence, by the apostle *James*, the royal law. *If you*

(l) Mat. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.

(m) Mark xii. 33.

(n) Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.

(o) Col. iii. 14.

(p) James ii. 8.

fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self, ye do well (p). 'Tis no surprize, that when there are so high commendations given of love, the apostle Paul, hearing of the faith, and love of the Ephesians, should offer to God his tribute of praise; Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers (q). Neither is it any wonder that he should pray for the Philippians, that their love might increase. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more (r). A like conduct, the same apostle takes, with regard to the Colossians, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints; for this cause, we also—do not cease to pray for you (s).

By these clear, and express passages, and others which we produc'd before, it is plain, that christians are not left to their liberty, whether they will cultivate in themselves, and others, this divine temper, or no: it is injoin'd upon them, with the highest authority, and the greatest variety, clearness, and strength of expression. I shall endeavour therefore,

(q) Eph. i. 15, 16.

(r) Phil. i. 9.

(s) Col. i. 4, 9.

IV. To recommend to you the pursuit of a settled, and steady affection to others, with all the genuine fruits, which arise from it, and of a constant improvement therein. And in order to render such a pursuit successful, it will not be amiss to set before you the means, which are proper to make use of, to attain it.

Take care to gain a due regulation of your passions. Whatever has a tendency to prevent love, or hinder its growth, should immediately be suppress'd. No rash suspicions, or groundless prejudices, are to be taken up against any, which if admitted, will occasion all dispositions to love to sicken, and become languid. Guard against quick, sudden, and frequent resentments, and especially express the greatest concern, that they do not settle in malice, which extinguishes affection. *Charity suffereth long, is not easily provok'd, thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*; and is it possible, that christian love, attended with these happy effects, should thrive and flourish in us, while we suffer anger often to arise, and upon trifling occasions, and allow it to stay and continue long with us? If you would have this (1) *fruit of the spirit, love, in-*

(1) Gal. v. 22,

crease in you, *be ye angry, and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* For this reason the apostle *Peter*, when he recommends growing in love (to which sense the contexture of the discourse leads) he exhorts first to *lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking (u)*. Let envy of the superiour talents of others, or of their greater success, and prosperity in life, be carefully subdu'd by us: *For charity envyeth not.* In order to this, let us frequently consider, that they are gifts of God, given by him for the benefit of others, as well as for the advantage of the persons themselves, and that they are accountable to him for the right use, or misimprovement of them. Express a concern to have your desires of the things of this world, cool and moderate. The love of the world, is as inconsistent with the love of others, as with the love of the father. *Charity seeketh not her own, looketh not on its own things, but also on the things of others (x)*. But how can this be constantly practis'd by such, as are engag'd in an immoderate pursuit of the enjoyments of this life? Will they always govern themselves by the strict rules, which the gospel lays down, of justice and beneficence? If

(u) 1 Pet. ii. 1.

(x) Phil. ii. 4.

we are too fond of a pleasurable life, shall we be dispos'd to mourn with those who mourn, or be inclin'd to sympathize with such, as are distress'd and miserable? *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, be-haveth not itself unseemly*; but will our behaviour be agreeable to these properties of christian love, if we are too desirous of praise, and have an overweening opinion of ourselves? shall we not ever be in danger of falling into boasting, vain-glory, and ostentation, which are the reverse to that humbleness of mind, which is the constant attendant of christian charity? It is evident then, that the government of our desires, and passions, is necessary to attain any considerable degree of that love to others, which the doctrine of Christ recommends.

In order to arrive to this which is previously requisite to the exercise of love to others, take care that you keep up a constant watchfulness over every motion of your affections, and over your whole course of behaviour to others, maintain a steady discipline over yourselves, compare daily each motion of your spirit, and every action of your conduct, with the doctrine of Christ, which enjoins us the duty of loving others, and teaches us the manner of performing it. When you observe any thing to have pass'd contrary to this divine temper, excite such resentment
of

of sorrow, as may make you more vigilant, and the better secure your future deportment.

In your frequent, and humble addresses to God, mourn over your small proficiency in this fruit of the spirit: confess with grief your deficiencies in the practice of it, and be as particular as you can in your retir'd and closet-devotions; renew your purposes to pursue higher attainments of it, and implore the divine aid, which you will find by strict and constant observation of yourselves, to be highly requisite. And you may do this with full assurance of faith, since the being, to whom you apply, has stiled himself the *God of love*.

Ever keep in your view the other world, and never regard the false principles, and maxims, whereby many who would be thought christians, but without any just reason, govern themselves. The attainments of Christian love will be very deficient, if we don't often attentively consider the future state, and the rewards, which will be conferr'd in proportion, as this increases in us.

In a word lay before your minds frequently, in the best, and fullest manner you can, the motives, which the christian religion offers to influence, and engage you to the practice of mutual love. And I shall endeavour herein to assist you.

D

Consider

Consider, it is recommended to us by the divine being, who created us, and so has a right to prescribe us laws, and knows our make and state, and the future world; and consequently what is fittest for us to practise. We are capable in some measure of discerning, that the obligation to love one another, arises from our frame, and is suited to our state, and the other life, and has a tendency to render us happy: But this is farther strengthen'd, when we reflect that he, who commands us to love one another, has a most perfect and comprehensive view of all things. It is a message deliver'd to us by the son of God, and if he came from heaven to open it in the greatest fulness to us, is it not reasonable that we carefully attend, and readily comply? Especially, when it is *such a sacrifice, as God is well pleas'd with*, and which he prefers to all whole burnt-offerings: when on this, together with the love of God, from whence it arises, and of the truth of which it is an evidence, *hang all the law, and the prophets*: and when for its excellence, 'tis stiled a *royal law*.

The practice of this duty, our Lord has made to be a distinguishing mark of his disciples. *By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another* (y). The disciples of *John the baptist*,

(y) John xiii. 35.

were

were known by some particular severities of life; and of the Pharisees, by some appearances of external sanctity; but that which our Saviour would have to be the badge of his followers, is mutual love. In this the first christians so excell'd, that they were propos'd even by *Julian* to be examples of it to the heathen. If then we would evidence ourselves to be true christians, let us endeavour to increase, and abound in love one to another.

By the practice of extensive love we resemble God, and become his children. *Love your enemies—That ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven; for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly father is perfect (z).* Or as *Luke* expresses it: *Be ye therefore merciful, as your father also is merciful.* It is usual, in the Jewish manner of expression, to represent a person to be a child of another, if he resemble him in disposition, and action. On this account, our Lord calls the Jews, who sought to kill him, notwithstanding the boast they made of being the children of *Abraham*, the children of the devil, when he says, *ye are of your father the devil (a).* When we love all men even our enemies, and

(z) Mat. v. 45, 48.

(a) John viii. 48.

express it in acts of goodness, we are therein like to God, and become his children. We are like him in that excellence which is most amiable, and without which, his knowledge, and wisdom, and power, would excite horror in our minds. *Be ye therefore perfect, as your father who is in heaven is perfect. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (b). Be ye therefore † followers of God as dear children.* And can there be any thing more excellent, and worthy our pursuit, than to imitate him, who is the standard of perfection, in the most shining quality that reasonable nature can possess? If we attain not this love, but the contrary to it prevails in us, we are sure that we are children of the devil. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother (c). Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God: he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love (d).*

Let us lay before our minds, in as lively a manner as we can, the greatness of that love, which God, who is every way perfect

(b) Eph. iv. 32.—v. 1.

(c) 1 John iii. 10.

† μιμηται imitators.

(d) 1 John iv. 7.

and happy in himself, has express'd to us, who are guilty and obnoxious to death, in the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ. This is represented to us in the strongest manner with this view, to excite and engage us to mutual affection. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live thro' him; and the apostle mentions a circumstance which is proper to make the consideration of it more forcible: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins, a sacrifice and offering for us, that we might not perish but have everlasting life. Beloved, if God so loved us, in so surprizing a manner, we ought also to love one another (e).* Who can often and seriously reflect on the amazing goodness, that God has shewn to us, and not be influenced to make this return of love to others, which is so strongly recommended to us, and so reasonably expected from us? If there be the least spark of ingenuity remaining in us, the consideration of God's love to us, in not *sparing his son; but giving him up for us all*, must certainly animate us to a constant, and steady exercise of mutual love.

(e) 1 John iv. 9, 10, 11.

Often meditate upon the wonders of Christ's love to us. We are frequently called upon to *love one another as Christ hath loved us. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (f). But while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (g).* No wonder that this love had a constraining force upon the apostle *Paul*: the like influence it should have upon us to love one another. The apostle when he had recommended, *not to look every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others; that this mind might be in them which was also in Christ Jesus*, adds as a powerful motive, *who being in the form of God,——made himself of no reputation, empty'd himself of the glory, and took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh, the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (h).* Did love invite our Lord to quit the glory he had with the father before the world began, and to condescend to dwell among men in the state, wherein they had all sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God, cloath'd in feeble flesh,

(f) John xv. 13.

(g) Rom. v. 8.

(h) Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

and liable to all our sinless infirmities and mortality; and when he tells us this is my commandment that ye love one another; shall not his astonishing love win upon us to obey it? Did he come from heaven, and the bosom of the father, to teach us how to practise aright mutual love, by his own example, as well as by his doctrine, and shall not we carefully attend to him, and constantly copy after him? did not love lead him resolutely and chearfully thro' opposition, distress, agonies, and death, for us; and when he calls upon us by this his love to us, to love one another; shall we not be prevail'd with to increase, and abound in it?

Consider your privileges as Christians, and the motives to love one another in that character, which result thence. *Put on as the elect of God*, his peculiar people, *holy*, separated to his service, and *beloved*, having particular marks of his favour, *bowels of mercy*, &c. By faith which influences love we in an eminent sense are his children; *begotten to a lively hope*: to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, *and that fadeth not away, reserv'd in heaven*. See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently, *being born again*, of the same father, and by the same means, *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God* (i).

(i) 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.—22, 23.

By love we have delightful intercourses with God. *No man hath seen God at any time, if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit. By loving one another, not in word only, but in deed and truth; we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him, and then (O blessed privilege!) have we confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight, and this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment (k).*

Reflect upon the happy effects, which arise to societies from mutual love. *And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; the most compleat and effectual tie to unite members of a society one to another, and will most certainly produce peace, for which reason it follows, and let the peace of God, which God recommends, rule (or be umpire) in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful (l): hereby*

(k) 1 John iv. 12, 13, 18, 19, 21, 22.

(l) Col. iii. 14, 15.

express your gratitude for the favours, which as christians you have receiv'd from God. Believers are represented as members of the same body, and (m) *the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* When each member in the natural body duly performs its office, and affords its proportion of influence to the happiness of the whole, what an appearance of cheerfulness and vigour has the body? When the contrary happens, how fading, languid, and dying! The like effects have loving one another, or the reverse, with the proper fruits of each, upon societies; (n) *But by love serve one another: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self: But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

Often and carefully consider the rewards, which are promis'd in a future life to the steady, and constant practice of mutual love. By love we are the children of God. *And*

(m) 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26, 27.

(n) Gal. v. 13, 14, 15.

if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ (o). The greatness of the future recompense is strongly represented by the apostle John. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, or when what we shall be shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. Our Lord recommends extensive love upon this motive; (p) But love your enemies, and do good——and your reward shall be great. When our Saviour describes the procedure of the last day, he mentions only the instances of goodness which arise from love, or the neglect and disregard of them. (q) Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger, and ye took me in.—— Verily I say unto you, in as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting

(o) Rom. viii. 17.
xxv. 34, 35.

(p) Luke vi. 35.

(q) Matth.

fire. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat ——— Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And as there is no reason, in consequence of what our Saviour here expressly declares, to expect future rewards, without mutual love attended with its genuine fruits; so let us seriously reflect, that since those recompences will be different in degree, it is likely they will bear some proportion to our care to cultivate, and improve in ourselves, and others, this divine and heavenly temper: and shall not this consideration strongly influence us to increase and abound therein?

Lastly, consider attentively the preference, which the great apostle of the gentiles gives of love, to faith and hope, those two signal virtues that enter into the christian character. (r) *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.* He had in the strongest terms represented charity to be a more excellent way than coveting earnestly even the best gifts. (s) *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or*

(r) 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

(s) 1 Cor. xii. 31. xiii. 1, 2.

a tinckling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. He then proceeds to describe charity, and among other characters of it, he tells us: *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away——when that which is perfect is come:——For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face——And now, in this state, tho' the extraordinary gifts of tongues and prophecy should cease before the other takes place, abideth faith, the belief of revealed truths, hope, the expectation of future happiness, charity, sincere and extensive love: * these three, these are the three eminent principles to direct and influence the christian life, but the greatest of these is charity: as charity is the end which faith and hope as means are design'd to beget and improve in us; as it is that wherein the image of God in us, and our proper perfection as intelligent beings ultimately consist; and as it will continue, when faith shall end in vision, and hope in fruition;*

* τὰ τρία ταῦτα.

and

and not only enter into the future state; but (when the imperfection that attends the practice of it in this life shall be remov'd) will make the perfection and happiness of it.

Since then love to one another is so plain a duty, and of so much excellence; since without it we cannot be true disciples of Christ; since mutual love renders us like to God, and makes us his children; since the practice of it is strenuously urged upon us by the amazing love which the father has expressed to us, and the wonders of Christ's love; since the privileges which arise from thence in point of gratitude strongly engage us; since by love societies are rendered more firm and happy, and we become blessings to all around us; since our own peace, and the peace of others result from it; since it is necessary to our happiness here, and in a future state; in a word, since it is the very complexion of heaven; let us be prevail'd with to use the means which are proper to improve it in ourselves, and others, with the utmost diligence, and constancy: let us *walk in love*, let love be the governing principle of our whole behaviour: let this heavenly plant be carefully tended by us, constantly watched and guarded from every thing that is hurtful and prejudicial, watered and cultivated that it may spread

spread and flourish, and bring forth plenty of fair and beautiful fruit, which will be grateful to God and the happy inhabitants of the other world. Let us not at any time provoke one another, unless *to love and good works* (t) which are its genuine fruits.

(t) Heb. x. 24.

F I N I S.

4 OC 58

